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Thursday, 4 November 1999, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Gurirab ..... (Namibia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Baali (Algeria), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Agenda item 14 *(continued)*

Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Agency (A/54/215)

Draft resolution (A/54/L.21)

Mr. Ban (Republic of Korea): Allow me to start by expressing my delegation's sincere gratitude to Mr. ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his comprehensive report and the remarkable performance he and his staff have achieved during the past year.

As we stand at the threshold of the new millennium, it would be timely for all of us to reflect on the achievements of the IAEA. Over the past four decades, the Agency has made a remarkable achievement as a faithful guardian of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and also as a promoter of peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Agency, through its effective safeguards activities, has played a crucial role in realizing a safer world, free from the threats of nuclear proliferation. Thanks to its technical cooperation programmes, nuclear applications in such diverse areas as agriculture, health and water-resources management are now available to a large number of States.

Let me now touch on some of the Agency's activities to which my Government attaches great importance. Ensuring a high level of nuclear safety is of paramount importance to my Government. We believe that nuclear safety is a crucial factor in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and public acceptance. The recent Tokaimura nuclear accident has reawakened the international community to the importance of nuclear safety. While we commend the Agency's contributions to the development of a worldwide safety regime, we believe that the Agency's role in enhancing nuclear safety should be further strengthened through the development of an extensive nuclear safety regime and comprehensive safety standards.

In this regard, my delegation welcomes the success of the first Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, held last April. The future Review Meetings may learn a lot more from the experience of this first Meeting. My delegation hopes that all Contracting parties will continue to make efforts to fulfil the objectives of the Convention, so that a high level of nuclear safety can be achieved and maintained worldwide through international cooperation. Recognizing also the importance of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, my Government looks forward to its early entry into force.

My Government has consistently supported the strengthening of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and the Agency's efforts to strengthen its

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safeguards system. One of the important achievements of the world community in the field of non-proliferation is the adoption of the Model Protocol Additional to Safeguards Agreements. The Republic of Korea signed the Additional Protocol last June and is now in the process of taking necessary measures to ratify it and implement the new obligations under the Protocol. My Government believes that an early entry into force of the Additional Protocol will contribute greatly to strengthening nuclear non-proliferation regimes. In this regard, my delegation is of the view that the Agency needs to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of its safeguards activities by introducing high-tech surveillance and monitoring systems, on the one hand, and by actively utilizing national or regional safeguards systems, on the other.

Ever since its establishment in 1957, the Agency has successfully fulfilled its statutory role in promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy, acting as a focal point for international cooperation in this field. In an increasingly deregulated energy environment, the nuclear industry is faced with the twin challenges of ensuring economic competitiveness and securing public acceptance.

The Republic of Korea has now established itself as one of the major nuclear-power-generating States in the world. At present, 16 units of nuclear power plants are in operation, providing 42 per cent of the total electricity supply, and four more units are under construction. By the year 2015, the share of nuclear power in Korea's total electric power generation is expected to reach 46 per cent, while the number of units in operation will be 28.

In the fields of peaceful uses of nuclear energy, my country has actively participated in the Agency's technical cooperation programme by hosting many regional and international workshops and conferences. We have also been providing the Agency's various activities with our expert knowledge and experience, gained from our own research and development programmes. Korea will continue its efforts to become a model for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Last month, the IAEA made a memorable achievement by adopting a series of resolutions at the forty-third session of the General Conference. My delegation notes with particular satisfaction that the decision to amend article VI of the Statute, which has been a subject of discussion over the past quarter-century, is a great achievement for all the States members of the IAEA. By expanding the Board of Governors in a more democratic and effective manner, we will be able to lay down a solid basis for coping with the many challenges of global nuclear issues in the coming new millennium. My delegation sincerely hopes and appeals to all the States members of the IAEA to take the necessary measures to make the amendment come into force as soon as possible.

Let me now turn to the North Korean nuclear issue. Since 1993, the General Conference of the IAEA has adopted resolutions on this issue with overwhelming support, expressing its deep concern over the continuing non-compliance of North Korea with its safeguards agreement and calling upon North Korea's full compliance with it. The resolutions adopted by the General Conference urge North Korea to cooperate fully with the Agency and to take all steps necessary to preserve the information concerning the past history of North Korea's nuclear activities.

As we all know, the Agency has made strenuous efforts to resolve this issue over the past seven years. However, it is regrettable to hear again from the Director General of the Agency that no new development has been achieved on most of the fundamental issues, due to the lack of cooperation on the part of North Korea.

The persistent non-compliance by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with its safeguards agreement constitutes a serious challenge not only to the Agency's overall safeguards system, but also to the basic framework of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). North Korea argues that the North Korean nuclear issue should be resolved through the 1994 Agreed Framework between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. While we believe that the Agreed Framework is a useful mechanism, it is not a substitute for the safeguard agreement between the IAEA and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, nor is it intended to release the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from its treaty obligation. Therefore, North Korea is reminded once again that its safeguards agreement remains binding and in force and that it must abide by its obligations under this agreement.

A few weeks ago, North Korea officially announced that it would suspend the test-firing of new long-range missiles. The Korean Government welcomed the announcement of North Korea in the hope that this would contribute to the easing of tensions in North-East Asia, including on the Korean peninsula.

My delegation would like to call on North Korea, in the same spirit, also to cooperate faithfully with the Agency in implementing the IAEA-Democratic People's Republic of Korea safeguards agreement in order to resolve this long-standing nuclear issue.

On the other hand, the international community needs to demonstrate once again its firm stance against any actions by North Korea which would undermine the basic regime of international nuclear non-proliferation.

For the past six years, the General Conference of the IAEA has adopted the resolutions on this issue every time without a single negative vote. Support for the resolutions has been overwhelming. This year, 60 member States of the IAEA joined as sponsors, and the resolution was adopted without a vote for the first time. The fact that it was adopted without a vote at the last session of the General Conference of IAEA clearly demonstrates that the international community is strongly committed to resolving this long-drawn-out North Korean nuclear issue as soon as possible.

We believe that the draft resolution before us, contained in document A/54/L.21, is a fair and balanced reflection of the interests of the international community concerning the work of the IAEA. All the resolutions of the General Conference this year were adopted by consensus. The draft resolution before us is a summary of the major resolutions of the General Conference. It would therefore be only logical and reasonable for the General Assembly to adopt this draft resolution without a vote.

Mr. Haque (Pakistan): I would like to begin by expressing our thanks to the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, for his introduction of the report of the Agency for 1998.

Pakistan attaches great importance to the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency. As a founding member of that important international organization, Pakistan has remained deeply committed to its statutory goals and objectives. Over the past decades Pakistan has benefited from and contributed to the work of the Agency. We acknowledge with appreciation the IAEA's contribution to the peaceful uses of the atom in Pakistan in a variety of fields, including power production, nuclear medicine, plant safety and agriculture.

The IAEA's technical assistance to Pakistan has helped us establish a base of professional manpower, research institutes, training facilities, medical centres and other technical services. For our part, despite our limited resources, we have, under IAEA auspices, freely shared our experience in peaceful uses of nuclear technology with other developing countries by providing experts, offering placements in relevant nuclear institutions and hosting training courses.

Pakistan has also participated actively in the Agency's policy-making organs and has served as a member of its Board of Governors for more than 25 years. It has also been elected twice as the Chairman of the Board of Governors. Additionally, Pakistan has the honour of serving as the first Chairman of the Agency's Standing Advisory Group on Technical Assistance and Cooperation.

The promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy is the *raison d'être* of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Despite the negative public perception created in some countries and apprehensions aroused about the danger of nuclear proliferation, nuclear energy remains a viable and attractive option for many countries, particularly for fossil-fuel-deficient developing countries. We believe that in the years ahead expansion of the energy sector will be one of the essential development requirements of the developing countries and that nuclear power has the potential to have a major socio-economic impact on member States, especially those of the developing world. We note, however, that the growth of nuclear power, both in industrialized and developing countries, has slowed down during the last two decades. We feel that the Agency must play an active role in creating greater awareness about the benefits of nuclear energy as well as in strengthening the technical infrastructure of member States interested in nuclear power.

Pakistan, as a developing country which is deficient in fossil fuels, must continue to utilize nuclear energy for its economic development. The construction of our second nuclear power plant, at Chashma, provided by the People's Republic of China under IAEA safeguards, is proceeding in a satisfactory manner. We acknowledge the valuable cooperation extended by the IAEA during the construction stages of the plant. We look forward to continued cooperation during the operational phases of the Chashma nuclear power plant, as well as for the planned second Chashma power reactor in the years ahead.

We appreciate the pivotal role played by the IAEA on issues relating to nuclear safety. In this context, we feel that the Convention on Nuclear Safety will facilitate the universal application of strict safety measures in nuclear installations all over the world. Pakistan, as a party to this Convention, submitted its nuclear safety report for peer review prior to the review meeting of the parties to the Convention. We are happy to report that the safety standards at our nuclear installations were found to be of a high quality.

Pakistan has also remained at the forefront of efforts by the developing countries, spread over the last 25 years, to obtain a greater say in the policy-making organs of the IAEA through their increased representation in the Board of Governors. We are pleased to note the decision by the forty-third session of the General Conference to expand the Board of Governors by eight seats through an amendment to article VI of its statutes.

From the perspective of developing countries, technical cooperation and transfer of technology lie at the heart of the IAEA's promotional activities. We commend the role played so far by the Agency in upgrading the scientific profile of developing countries. We feel, however, that IAEA's activities in the field of technical cooperation need to be further strengthened. Any curtailment or roll back of technical cooperation activities will be retrogressive. It is important that the Agency should not lose sight of its promotional character. We are somewhat concerned at a perceptible shift in emphasis towards the verification role. Safeguards no doubt constitute a basic function of the Agency, and we remain fully supportive of cost-effective implementation of safeguards in accordance with agreements voluntarily entered into by States. However, verification and safeguards activities of the Agency should not have an adverse impact on its promotional role.

Pakistan remains committed to the goals of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. Pakistan's efforts spread over a quarter of a century to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia collapsed in the face of the Indian nuclear tests conducted in May last year. The resultant threat to Pakistan's security left us with no option but to conduct nuclear tests to restore the strategic balance. Even in the post-nuclear-test phase, Pakistan has acted with restraint and a sense of responsibility. We have announced a unilateral moratorium on further testing and have emphasized the need to prevent a nuclear arms race. To achieve these objectives, Pakistan has proposed to India a strategic restraint regime.

Pakistan also remains committed not to export or transfer nuclear or other sensitive technology to any country. We are nevertheless deeply concerned over the draft nuclear doctrine announced by India, which envisages the operational deployment of nuclear weapons based on a triad of delivery systems. Any steps in this direction may well trigger a nuclear arms race in South Asia and further imperil the already volatile security situation in the region. We believe that the international community must dissuade India from pursuing the dangerous path of raising the nuclear stakes in South Asia.

Mrs. Chin Powles (New Zealand): The New Zealand delegation wishes to express its thanks to Director General ElBaradei for his introduction of the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) this morning, and for his vision and leadership over the past year. New Zealand commends the work of the Agency and the dedication of its staff in meeting its responsibilities.

The IAEA is one of the pillars of the international security architecture. It makes a vital contribution to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament through its safeguards and its verification role under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). New Zealand attaches the highest importance to the Agency's work. We are therefore concerned that not all signatories have as yet met their commitments by concluding safeguards agreements with the Agency. It is also of concern that although the number of countries signing on to the additional protocols is growing, the protocols are in force in only a small number of those countries. New Zealand welcomes the secretariat's efforts to encourage the widest possible application of the additional protocol, and we reiterate our desire to see the strengthened safeguards system become the norm at the earliest possible date.

It is deeply disappointing that we again have to express our concern about the continuing non-compliance of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with its safeguards agreement, in spite of repeated calls by the international community for such compliance. The agreement remains binding and in force, and New Zealand urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to cooperate fully with the Agency in its implementation. In this same regard, New Zealand commends the patient persistence of the Director General and his staff in working towards the implementation of the agreement.

We also commend the Agency for its efforts in implementing the relevant Security Council resolutions on Iraq, and we look forward to the resumption of the Agency's ongoing monitoring and verification activities in that country without delay.

For New Zealand, nuclear safety is a priority area of the IAEA's work. We subscribe fully to the need for a global culture of nuclear safety. The Agency's proactive work on potential year 2000 problems in relation to nuclear facilities is of special topical interest. Closer to home, and of ongoing and deep concern to New Zealanders, is the transport of radioactive materials.

New Zealand was very pleased when the General Conference of the IAEA was able to adopt a resolution on the amendment of article VI of the Agency's statute to provide for the expansion of Board membership and deal with the allocation of each member State to one of the areas listed in that article. The issue has occupied enormous time and energy over many years, and it is thanks to the patience and skill of successive Chairs of the Board that the resolution of this issue, to which so many attached such importance, was possible.

There are many challenges facing the Agency, not least that of providing resources for important new activities, including in support of nuclear arms control and reduction activities. New Zealand looks forward to continuing to work with the Director General and his staff in facing up squarely to these challenges.

Mr. Benítez Sáenz (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the delegations of the countries of the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) — Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay — and the delegations of the associated States, Bolivia and Chile, I would like to express our satisfaction at the report presented by the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The MERCOSUR countries, Bolivia and Chile fully share the objectives of the international community in the promotion of the peaceful uses of atomic energy and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

In this regard, we reaffirm our full commitment to the international safeguards regime applied and administered by the IAEA and to its work in promoting the use of nuclear science and nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

We view the expansion of the Board of Governors as a sign of important progress, although we would like to have seen a more equitable representation for our region, given the relevance of this question and the region's contribution to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and non-proliferation.

As far as verification is concerned, we urge the Agency to give the highest priority to achieving a real integration of safeguards measures rather than simply adding them on.

In another area, we wish to highlight the importance of attaining and maintaining high levels of nuclear safety at the global level. In this connection, active participation is highlighted in the first review meeting of the contracting parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, which took place last April. This initial exercise was very positive for the parties, and its continuation will stimulate the strengthening of nuclear safety in the world.

Likewise, the countries of MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile believe it is necessary to pay due attention to other aspects of safety, such as the transport of radioactive materials and sources of radiation.

We are pleased at the prompt implementation of the mechanisms provided for in the Programme of Regional Cooperative Arrangements for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America (ARCAL). We view this instrument as a multilateral channel specifically designed to foster cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in the Latin American region.

Finally, let me emphasize that on the basis of the regional commitment to non-proliferation, transparency and the promotion of international peace and security, the countries of MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile view the IAEA as especially relevant in the promotion of the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy and we consider the Agency a key actor in the international regime for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Luck (Australia): The Australian delegation is pleased to commend the Director General, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, for his report on the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Australia's commitment to the IAEA is strong. The Agency plays a central role in the contributions of nuclear technology to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world. It plays a vital role in maintaining global nuclear non-proliferation and security through the operation of the nuclear safeguards system and in areas such as illicit trafficking of nuclear materials and the

management of surplus fissile material from dismantled weapons.

It is this role which makes the IAEA one of the central pillars of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, of which the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone.

Australia also appreciates the importance of the Agency's work in nuclear safety, radioactive waste management and transportation of nuclear and other radioactive materials.

It is now less than six months before the start of the sixth Review Conference of the NPT. This will be a landmark event in the non-proliferation and disarmament calendar. Although the review process itself is conducted outside the IAEA framework, it nonetheless covers articles III and IV of the NPT, under which the Agency is either designated as, or taken to be, the implementing Agency for international safeguards and the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The NPT is the centrepiece of a nuclear arms control regime made up of a series of interlocking international treaties, arrangements, undertakings and norms aimed at halting the spread of nuclear weapons and advancing nuclear disarmament.

Australia attaches high priority to the NPT's continuing strength. With 187 States parties, the NPT is the most widely adhered to arms control Treaty and makes a vital contribution to global security. All parties have a shared interest in working together to produce outcomes that reinforce the NPT at the 2000 Review Conference.

There is a continuing need to remain vigilant in looking for clandestine nuclear weapons programmes and in maintaining pressure on non-compliant States.

Australia adds its voice to those that have expressed concern over the fact that, for nearly a year now, the Agency has been unable to carry out its inspection activity in Iraq in accordance with its mandate under Security Council resolution 687 (1991). Australia is concerned that Iraq should not take advantage of the cessation of IAEA inspections to reactivate its nuclear weapons programme. We welcome the IAEA's commitment to resume verification in Iraq as soon as circumstances allow.

With respect to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Agency's responsibility is twofold: first, that flowing from the IAEA's safeguards agreement with North Korea, and secondly, the role pursuant to the Agreed Framework concluded between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States.

Australia has welcomed the Agreed Framework, as it has welcomed and supported politically and financially progress achieved through the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO). The IAEA has done well to monitor, under difficult circumstances, the freeze, required by the Agreed Framework, of nuclear activities in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. On the other hand, for the Agency to discharge the full responsibilities assigned to it under the Agreed Framework, there will need to be full cooperation from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea authorities.

Australia remains concerned at the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's continuing non-compliance with the IAEA-Democratic People's Republic of Korea safeguards agreement. We register again our expectation that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will preserve all information needed by the IAEA to verify its initial inventory.

We welcome the recent apparent improvement in relations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and other countries, and we hope this will be reflected in reduced tensions in the region and improved North Korean cooperation with the IAEA.

As Mr. ElBaradei noted in his statement, the IAEA's focus of work this year has been on strengthening the safeguards system. Australia has been a strong and active proponent of the IAEA's strengthened safeguards system, embodied in the Model Additional Protocol, to improve the IAEA's inspection and access rights. Australia played a prominent role in the negotiation of the Model Protocol and was the first country to ratify an additional protocol in 1997.

The IAEA safeguards system is a key component of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Australia has supported the IAEA's efforts in encouraging signature and entry into force of additional protocols for strengthened safeguards. We believe that the international community should be moving towards declaring the Model Protocol as constituting the Agency's safeguards system prescribed in the NPT. This will require concerted effort, given that 50-odd States parties have yet to comply even with their legal obligations to conclude a classical safeguards agreement under the NPT.

The IAEA's work over the past 12 months has also included the other pillar of IAEA activities, nuclear safety. In this context, we would like to note the efforts of the Agency in Y2K activities, which have focused on nuclear installation safety. The Agency has played a pivotal role in facilitating information exchanges on compliance in the run-up to the millennium. Australia was glad to join the group of countries contributing extrabudgetary resources to help fund IAEA activity in this area.

We were also active participants in the first review meeting of the Convention on Nuclear Safety, held in April this year. The review process has already had a discernible impact on the safety programmes of a number of contracting parties. We urge all those operating, constructing or planning nuclear power reactors, if they have not yet adhered to the Convention, to do so now.

Further on the issue of nuclear safety, we see the need to mention the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. This is an important part of the international framework for the safe conduct of nuclear activities. There are 13 contracting States and 39 signatories to the Joint Convention, of which Australia is one. We urge all to sign and ratify.

These arrangements form an important part of the IAEA's framework for the safe conduct and improvement of peaceful nuclear activity. Australia supports the participation of all parties in these arrangements.

The IAEA's technical cooperation programme is also an important part of the Agency's role in encouraging the use of nuclear technology for peace, health and development throughout the world. Australia, in recognition of the importance of the programme, will be increasing its voluntary contribution this year. Australia will continue its traditional in-kind technical support to the Agency and to various neighbouring countries in various aspects of peaceful nuclear technology.

The Asian Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (RCA) programme is one in which Australia invests particular effort. Among the more interesting projects under way under the RCA is the application of nuclear techniques in dealing with problems of coastal and marine pollution.

The new millennium will be no less challenging than the one we are now exiting. The non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament agenda has faced some tests in the recent past, and will continue to require solid effort.

Nuclear testing in South Asia last year underlines the continuing need to bring the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty into force (CTBT). We urge those who have yet to sign and ratify the CTBT to do so forthwith. Significant progress has been made in establishing the international monitoring system, which is a key component of the Treaty's verification machinery. While many States have signed the Treaty, Australia will continue to work with others to secure further signatures, as well as the 44 ratifications required to bring it into force.

Another key priority, acknowledged as such repeatedly by the international community, is the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty. The 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference identified the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty as one of the most urgent disarmament and non-proliferation steps the international community should take. Australia remains strongly committed to a fissile material cut-off treaty and is working to have the Conference on Disarmament commence negotiations on it as soon as possible. Australia has been prominent in working on technical aspects of a fissile material cut-off treaty.

Mr. ElBaradei's comments reflect the highlights of another full year of activity by the IAEA in pushing forward with its mandate to harness the atom for the benefit of humanity. We support the Agency in its efforts and will continue to provide the technical, financial and political support for that effort to continue.

Ms. Aghadjanian (Armenia): Let me begin by expressing my Government's gratitude for the important work carried out by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) during the past year and the first half of the current year. We are confident that under the leadership of Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, the Agency, which enjoys a very positive reputation in many countries, including my own, will make significant progress towards its two main objectives — promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy and safeguarding against the use of nuclear material for military purposes.

According to certain predictions, by the end of the millennium more than 20 countries will be in possession of nuclear weapons. Within the last few years, the international community has taken decisive steps to avert a predictable nightmare. A great number of countries

have endorsed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and similar treaties aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and their testing. Armenia remains fully committed to the principles of non-proliferation and supports the IAEA activities aimed at reinforcing the effectiveness of the safeguards system.

With the conclusion of the new Model Protocol Additional to Safeguards Agreements, prospects are good that countries may move beyond an era when the threat of nuclear weapons and their proliferation were a dominant feature of the international landscape. Encouraging increasing numbers of States committed to non-proliferation to sign additional protocols would serve two purposes: first, to subject the portion of the world's nuclear fuel cycle currently under the Agency's comprehensive safeguards to a further strengthened system of safeguards and, secondly, to exert requisite influence on the States that are prone to pursuing undeclared nuclear activities, with a view to their eventual adoption of this new form.

The Government of Armenia attaches great importance to the legal framework that creates a solid basis for the strict observance of safety standards and upgrading. On 1 March this year, the President of Armenia signed the law of the Republic of Armenia on the safe utilization of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Armenia is a contracting party to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the first legal instrument to directly address the safety of nuclear power plants worldwide. Armenia has also joined the two IAEA Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and its Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency.

Armenia considers the IAEA a key partner in developing its programme of peaceful nuclear energy and pays serious attention to the field of technical cooperation. We highly commend the secretariat, especially the Europe section, for its continuous support and collaboration. Within the two-year cycle of technical cooperation with the IAEA, the Armenian Nuclear Regulatory Agency carried out coordination activities for four national and 18 regional programmes involving Armenia.

At the bilateral level, Armenia continues its close cooperation with a significant number of countries. That cooperation includes implementation of joint projects on nuclear safety, exchange of technical information, improvement of operational safety standards and radiation protection at nuclear power plants, seismic safety and the training of personnel. One of the most recent agreements, one of great importance for Armenia, was signed on 23 September 1999 between the Government of Armenia and the European Union and is related to assistance for the development of the energy sector, including nuclear energy.

The Government of Armenia is committed to nuclear safety, specifically to achieving the highest standards of safety at Unit II of the Medzamor nuclear power plant. I would like to take this opportunity to express the gratitude of my Government for the considerable assistance extended by the IAEA, both before and after the reopening of the Medzamor plant, in the fields of seismic safety evaluation, emergency planning, radiation and seismic monitoring systems and organizing training courses and scientific visits.

Many countries in the world use nuclear techniques for a variety of peaceful purposes: electric power generation, food production, medicine and industrial applications. More than 40 countries have nuclear reactors, and the scores of major facilities containing nuclear materials that are accounted for and safeguarded under agreements with the IAEA are in operation in some 68 countries. We are confident that stronger efforts are needed to strengthen international cooperation in radiation and waste management, as well as to combat illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and other radioactive sources and to guarantee their secure disposal and storage. We must emphasize, however, that the challenge of ensuring non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy cannot be met by the IAEA alone and that the international community at large must work harder.

We believe that the IAEA will continue its coordination role within the process of attracting possible donors for the successful implementation of projects for Armenia and that, as an independent intergovernmental organization, it will continue to seek to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world.

In conclusion, I would like to assure the Secretary-General of my country's full cooperation in his work furthering the goals of the IAEA. We also hope that the draft resolution contained in document A/54/L.21, of which Armenia is a sponsor, will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Zhdanovich (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The delegation of Belarus would like to express its gratitude to the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, for

his presentation of the annual report on the Agency, which gives detailed information about the Agency's activities.

The Republic of Belarus notes with satisfaction the multifaceted, fruitful and useful activities of the IAEA, a unique international organization that brings together the efforts of Member States to ensure the effective and safe use of the achievements of nuclear science and technology for the good of humankind in the spirit of the lofty United Nations principles of humanism.

The Republic of Belarus, which has as a constitutional objective the establishment of a non-nuclear-weapon State, is taking the necessary steps to achieve this goal. Belarus has ratified the START Treaty and signed the safeguards agreements with the IAEA. Another important milestone in this regard was the signing of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

We attach great importance to the IAEA's efforts to promote the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones, because we know that such zones can prevent the use of nuclear weapons and also serve as an instrument for strengthening peace and security and building confidence among countries. The initiative of the President of the Republic of Belarus, Alyaksandr Lukashenka, to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Europe remains timely and is gaining a significant number of adherents among member States. In this connection, we reaffirm once again our readiness to consult with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe on this issue.

The Republic of Belarus, which is committed to the principles of non-proliferation, welcomes the efforts of the Agency in the area of the security of nuclear materials and radioactive waste as well as the measures taken to combat their illicit trafficking. In keeping with the safeguards agreements, our country is working to ensure the effective monitoring of the nuclear materials located in Belarus and is considering the question of signing the Model Additional Protocol to Safeguards Agreements.

Over the past year, planned IAEA inspections have taken place successfully in our country. Agency experts have rated highly the measures proposed by Belarus to enhance the effectiveness of the safeguards system, in particular the electronic transfer of data to IAEA headquarters. The Government of Belarus, which is participating in the first stage of the 93 + 2 programme, is providing the Agency, on a regular basis, with the relevant information on nuclear activities and is ensuring the unhindered work of IAEA inspectors and their free access to facilities that have been placed under the IAEA safeguards system.

Acknowledging the responsibility of member States for preventing the illicit use and trafficking of nuclear materials, Belarus is reviewing the effectiveness of the State system for the inventory and control of nuclear materials. This system was established under the auspices of the Agency within the framework of the technical cooperation programme.

The assistance of Japan and the active support of the IAEA in Belarus have made it possible, with the help of a unique type of technology, to establish, under the auspices of the Agency, a regional scientific centre for the inventory, control and physical protection of nuclear materials. The successful holding, with the support of the IAEA, of two international scientific seminars has enabled representatives of Armenia, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Uzbekistan and Ukraine to find out about implementing regulation and control mechanisms within the framework of the international safeguards regime, and to learn of new methods and practical means for the non-destructive control of nuclear materials.

The Government of our country expresses its most sincere gratitude to Japan for its assistance in providing the centre with the necessary equipment, and we hope for the continuation of further cooperation with Japan in this area. Our delegation would like also to appeal to donor countries to lend assistance in the establishment of the centre.

Belarus attaches great significance to the strengthening of the international safeguards system and is doing its utmost strictly to comply with the obligations it has entered into in order to ensure the security of nuclear materials. In coordination with the IAEA, the donor countries — the United States of America, Japan and Sweden — are lending Belarus significant technical assistance in setting up and enhancing State systems for the inventory and control of nuclear materials. These systems are enabling us not only to inventory nuclear materials but also to assess and monitor the transit of such materials through the territory of our Republic. In this connection, I would like to express our gratitude to the countries mentioned earlier for their assistance.

In its pursuit of a consistent policy to enhance and deepen fruitful international cooperation in the area of nuclear and radiation safety, the Republic of Belarus took

yet another step in that direction in January 1999 by acceding to the Convention on Nuclear Safety. Belarus participated in the work of the first review meeting of the contracting parties to the Convention, in keeping with its belief that close cooperation among the States parties to the Convention is a prerequisite for ensuring nuclear and radiation safety.

Experts in our Republic are currently working on the accession by Belarus to the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage. Belarus deeply appreciates the sustained efforts of the Agency to enhance the safety of reactors of all types. Our delegation believes that the IAEA must continue its work to establish legal and monitoring machinery designed to enhance the safety of peoples. In this context, we would note our Government's decision to postpone the decision on the question of the building of a nuclear-power station, which was taken on the basis of our understanding of the State's responsibility for ensuring the safe use of the plant and of our bitter experience in overcoming the consequences of the worst-ever nuclear disaster, which has influenced public opinion on nuclear energy.

After the Chernobyl disaster, which was recognized by the United Nations as the worst technologically caused disaster of the twentieth century, nuclear radiation security has taken on particular significance in Belarus. In view of that tragic experience, we are convinced that enhancing the safety of nuclear-power plants must remain a priority goal for the IAEA in the twenty-first century.

The cooperation between Belarus and the IAEA, within the framework of the technical cooperation programme, is the Agency's most dynamic programme. It is designed to develop the scientific, technological and economic potential of member States, and we consider it very effective.

The implementation in Belarus of joint projects to rehabilitate the areas contaminated by radiation as a result of the Chernobyl disaster, and the Agency's support for the Inter-Agency Task Force on Chernobyl, have had a tangible effect in creating favourable conditions for the long-term sustained development of the affected regions.

The challenge of overcoming the consequences of the disaster at the Chernobyl power plant remains paramount for our country. The Belarusian Government is currently taking the following related steps: first, in the medical field, the delivery of various types of equipment needed for cancer patients and in other areas of radiation medicine, and the development of new technologies; secondly, the rehabilitation of the areas that have suffered as a result of the Chernobyl disaster; thirdly, the creation of reliable systems for emergency planning and rapid reaction to nuclear disasters; and fourthly, the enhancement of the infrastructure for radiation safety and the disposal of radioactive waste.

In 1999 we completed a number of major projects that have laid the foundation for the exploitation of our country's scientific, technological and productive potential in radiation metrology and medicine, agriculture and the productive sector. One of those projects, which is being carried out successfully in Belarus, involves the production of rapeseed and rapeseed oil for industrial purposes in the areas affected by the Chernobyl disaster. In future our Government plans to continue work in this area and is interested in beginning production of food-grade rapeseed oil. It is counting on the further cooperation of the IAEA in this area.

Belarus is taking an active part in regional cooperation. With the financial support of the Government, several seminars have been organized with the IAEA and traineeships provided for foreign students. Belarusian specialists are lending expert assistance to countries of the region. Enterprises in our Republic that produce radiation control devices are included in the register of suppliers of equipment to members of the Agency. The scientific, industrial and technical experience that has been accumulated in our country in the nuclear field is providing essential assistance in preparations for the technical cooperation programme for 2001-2002. Our delegation hopes that the programme, as formulated for the next two-year cycle, will continue to be geared towards achieving concrete practical results.

In conclusion, the delegation of Belarus would like to express its approval of the work of the Agency and its support for the priority areas for future activities. We hope for close cooperation with the Agency in resolving all problems pertaining to the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to

five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Choe Myong Nam (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): My delegation wishes to exercise its right of reply with regard to some false remarks that have been made about the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula, which we strongly believe should be treated in an impartial way. The nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula remains a political and military matter between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, and the Agreed Framework between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States of America was concluded in an attempt to resolve it. The Agreed Framework was supported by the Security Council, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and a large number of countries, including States members of the European Union. Only when the Agreed Framework is implemented will we be able to comply fully with the safeguards agreement.

However, even five years after the conclusion of the Agreed Framework, not a single article providing for the obligations of the United States has been properly implemented. Urging us to fully comply with the safeguards agreement while disregarding that reality will not help resolve the nuclear issue in an impartial way. If someone is truly interested in an impartial resolution of the nuclear issue, as well as full compliance with the safeguards agreement, they should urge the United States to properly fulfil its obligations under the Agreed Framework. Urging us to fully comply with the safeguards agreement while failing to say a single word about the non-fulfilment by the United States of its obligations under the Agreed Framework is an act of pressure against my country. It is not pressure, but only impartiality that can contribute to a resolution of the issue.

In particular, my delegation categorically rejects the allegations made by the representative of the United States this morning. The concern expressed by the United States representative was not reasonable. As a party to the Agreed Framework between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States of America, the United States has accepted, and is therefore well aware, that the Agreed Framework and the safeguards agreement are directly related, and that only when the Agreed Framework is implemented will it be possible to comply with the safeguards agreement.

According to the Agreed Framework, we are supposed to comply with the safeguards agreement only after that Agreed Framework has been implemented. So the claims made by the representative of the United States can be construed as nothing but an ill-intentioned attempt to cover up for that country's non-fulfilment of its obligations under the Agreed Framework. The United States has not properly fulfilled any of its obligations, whereas we have faithfully fulfilled our obligations under the Agreed Framework. Therefore, the issue as to when it might be possible for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fully comply with the safeguards agreement is something that only the United States can know.

As to the allegation made by the Japanese representative, it is merely deceptive rhetoric. Originally, it was Japan's habit to pursue its own interests with the support of big Powers. It was entirely with the support of a big Power, the United States, that defeated imperial Japan was able to survive and build up its strength for re-invasion. Japan therefore has no alternative but to remain silent about the United States, which has not been implementing the Agreed Framework between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States of America.

Japan is clamouring furiously about the so-called nuclear issue in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with the aim of camouflaging its nuclear armaments policy. It is a well-known fact that Japan is the world's most capable country in the area of developing nuclear weapons. Japan continues to import huge amounts of plutonium for processing in its factory — the biggest of its kind in the world — with the tacit approval of the United States. We are of the view that the international community should stay duly focused on the Japanese rush towards nuclear armament.

My delegation also categorically rejects the allegations made by the South Korean representative on the same issue. The truth is that the South Korean authorities have no right to speak about the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula. As a group of puppets barely managing to maintain their livelihood with the help of external forces, they are the traitors of the nation who introduced a large number of nuclear weapons into the Korean peninsula, which is the living ground of the entire Korean nation. Their accusations about our so-called nuclear issue is nothing but a cowardly act to impair the image of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and to further isolate and stifle the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, with the backing of ambassadors such as those of the United States and Japan.

We wish to reiterate that the South Korean authorities can never be the party with which we deal directly in the process of resolving the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula, since they have no right at all to speak on this issue. The South Korean authorities should know this.

Mr. Lee Kie-cheon (Republic of Korea): Although I am a little reluctant to take the floor, I feel an obligation to set the record straight on several inaccurate statements made by the North Korean delegation. My delegation will not, however, make a detailed counter-argument to each and every point raised by the North Korean delegation.

It is regrettable that North Korea has once again tried to link compliance with the safeguards agreement of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to the Agreed Framework between the United States of America and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. As has been reaffirmed by several General Assembly resolutions, as well as resolutions of the IAEA General Conference during the past seven years, the safeguards agreement between the IAEA and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is binding and in force. North Korea thus has an obligation to implement that agreement. My delegation is of the view that the Agreed Framework between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a useful mechanism for securing peace and stability on the Korean peninsula. The Government of the Republic of Korea is fully committed to its faithful implementation. However, as I mentioned in my statement, the Agreed Framework is by no means a substitute for North Korea's safeguards agreement with the IAEA. It does not relieve North Korea of its obligations under the safeguards agreement.

Despite North Korea's assertion that my Government is seeking to isolate North Korea, the opposite is in fact true. The Government of the Republic of Korea has made it quite clear on many occasions that it adheres to a policy of engagement with North Korea. Its policy aims at peaceful coexistence on the Korean peninsula by emphasizing reconciliation and cooperation. We have made every effort to bring North Korea out of its self-imposed isolation through creative, constructive and practical means. Along these lines, my Government has provided humanitarian and economic assistance for North Korea and has facilitated the easing of sanctions in coordination with our allies, including the United States, Japan and the European Union. These initiatives demonstrate our honest desire for North Korea to become an integrated, responsible member of the international community. We hope that North Korea will understand this genuine goodwill and reciprocate with the same sincerity.

To our frustration, North Korea has exercised its right of reply quite often over the past few years. We hope that North Korea will change tack in the future by engaging in normal, harmonious and constructive dialogue.

Finally, my delegation would like to advise the North Korean delegation to respect the established norms and courtesies of this international body. After all, the United Nations is an organization that allows open debate of diverse ideas with the ultimate goal of achieving a better and safer world society.

Mr. Yoshikawa (Japan): My delegation too is obliged to exercise its right of reply concerning the statement made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. That representative made several allegations concerning Japan's position. My delegation would like to speak on two points. One is Japan's nuclear policy, and the second is the participation of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in the North Korean nuclear weapons issue.

As the only country to have experienced the unspeakable horror of a nuclear attack, Japan is making every effort to ensure that such a tragedy will never be repeated. Thus, Japan strictly observes its three non-nuclear principles of not producing nuclear weapons, not possessing them, and not permitting their introduction into its territory. Japan is a non-nuclear-weapon State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and has been faithfully implementing its obligations under the Treaty together with accepting IAEA safeguards measures. Furthermore, Japan is bound both by its domestic laws and by international treaty strictly to limit the use of nuclear energy to peaceful purposes.

I turn to the IAEA's participation in the North Korean nuclear weapons issue. In view of the important progress achieved in recent talks between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, it is Japan's firm belief that it is as important as ever for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fully cooperate with the Agency in the implementation of its Safeguards Agreement. We strongly hope that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will respond positively to the resolution adopted at the General Conference of the IAEA. As a technical specialized agency, the IAEA bears the important international responsibility of ensuring nuclear non-proliferation. The claim by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that

the IAEA does not have the authority to be involved in this issue is thus clearly wrong. It is imperative that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea cooperate with the IAEA for the full implementation of the Agreement. That the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should cooperate with the IAEA is the wish not only of Japan but of the international community as a whole, as can be seen both in the adoption by consensus of the relevant IAEA resolution and in many of the statements made during today's debate. Japan hopes that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will take the collective will of the international community seriously and will respond in a constructive manner.

Japan appreciates and welcomes the important progress achieved in the recent talks between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and the decision of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to suspend missile launches while the talks are under way. The Government of Japan, for its part, decided to resume the operation of chartered flights between Japan and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

My delegation would like to reaffirm that Japan desires peace and stability in that part of the region.

Mr. Choe Myong Nam (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The statement I made earlier in exercise of my right of reply to South Korea was a deserved condemnation based on the actual reality. In fact, the South Korean authorities have been hell-bent on introducing a large number of nuclear weapons, enough to exterminate the whole nation, blindly following the instructions of the external forces in whose hands they are trapped.

In spite of this, the South Korean authorities are calling us to account, on the pretext of the so-called nuclear issue of the North. This is like a thief calling ordinary innocent people thieves. Still, they do not wish to be called puppets and traitors to the nation. There is a proverb saying that if you are afraid of being beaten you should refrain from doing devilish things to others. The South Korean authorities are called upon to keep this in mind.

What is more ridiculous is that they are trying to stick their nose into the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula, about which they have no right at all to talk. The more the South Korean authorities talk about nuclear issues, the more they will be laughed at and denounced.

I turn now to the allegations just made by the Japanese representative. We are very much perplexed by the remarks that the Japanese representative just made. As I clearly stated in my statement in exercise of the right of reply, this is nothing but an ill-minded attempt to camouflage its nuclear armament, which runs counter to the so-called three principles of nuclear non-proliferation to which Japan is committed. By the way, the Japanese representative has just been talking in praise of the three non-nuclear principles; could the Japanese representative be kind enough to explain to all of us why officials of Japanese ministries are talking about nuclear rearmament? Is the Japanese Government ready, in fact, to enshrine the three non-nuclear principles in law?

While thoroughly rejecting the allegations of the Japanese representative again, we once again reiterate our call upon the international community to be vigilant about Japan's manoeuvres to rearm with nuclear weapons, which are motivated by its intention to revive militarism and to re-invade other countries.

The Acting President: I should like to inform members that action on draft resolution A/54/L.21 will be taken at a later date to be announced.

The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.